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EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

AN EDITOR SPEAKS HIS MIND ON DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

"A survey recently was made by the Carnegie Foundation which shows a significant weakness in democratic education. A pamphlet has been published by the Public Affairs Committee of New York, summarizing the results of the Carnegie Foundation's 10-year study of higher education in Pennsylvania. One of the significant findings of the Foundation is that 'only about half the youth of outstanding ability are getting into college, and at least one-fourth of the college students who get there are below the average out-of-school youth in ability.'

"Which confirms the *Gazette's* ancient hunch that a good quarter and possibly a third of the students in our colleges are intellectual roughnecks who go there to learn manners, to join a fraternity that will help them in their business, to marry properly placed mates, and to swank around at football games as slightly squeezed alumni.

"We are taxing ourselves to educate a student body which is at least 30 per cent

chumps and always will be chumps. Moreover this foundation report reveals that in some way we are barring from colleges, by reason of the expense of going to college, about half the American youth of high-grade mentality and first-rate ability.

"Democracy is clumsy, of course. Its ways are stumbling, in the nature of things. But by the Lord Harry, it just can't afford to go on keeping half the intelligent youth out of college by reason of their economic position and filling up the ranks of at least a fourth of the college students with uneducatable dumb clucks who have nothing but money to put them in school and nothing but a brass veneer to back them up when they get out of school.

"While we are defending liberty in this fair land, let us not forget that liberty is not a perfected engine of progress. It is the best the world knows, but it certainly needs a few more gadgets to make it hit on all six."

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE,
in the *Emporia Gazette*

EVALUATION MEASURES NEEDED

"The curriculum revision movement, which has taken the country by storm, has in too many communities been actuated by the incentive of keeping-up-with-the Joneses rather than by definite and worthy purposes of reorganization," Harold Spears, director of research and secondary education in the Evansville, Indiana, public schools, said at the twenty-eighth annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English. "To revise the curriculum has become the popular thing to do. It is doubtful if a school system can get much advantage out of curriculum reorganization unless the program indicates sooner or later a definite philosophy or point of view. Otherwise, revision is apt to become mere tinkering." Among the weaknesses of the curriculum movement, Dr. Spears mentioned: the fact

can continue to publish these materials, that changes in curriculum have not been accompanied by changes in administrative technique; lack of needed instructional supplies; and unwillingness to set aside the old. Curriculum reorganization must place more faith in the findings of research, he added.

A breathing-spell during which the rapid educational changes of the past decade can be appraised was recommended by Marquis E. Shattuck of the Detroit Public Schools and Wayne University, retiring president of the Council. "The doctrine of a changing world has been so generally accepted that we have been led into a line of reasoning which argues that change is ever for the better," he said. "To make the necessary appraisal, we must perfect our tools for evaluation and guard carefully the selection of those who use the tools and those who interpret results."

The new basic formula for modern education takes into consideration pupils' individual differences and their possibilities, Dr. Malcolm MacLean, director of General College, University of Minnesota, reported. "We are shifting our point of view away from snooping out and bearing down on the errors and blunders of our youngsters in English and learning to search for and foster talent in whatever direction it may rise. We will learn in time to take the youngster where he is, even if it be in a stage of absorption in the pulps, and help build for him a larger experience in the reading of current and classic literature, instead of damning him as a pulp reader." The chief job in English, Dr. MacLean asserted, is the training of the great number of students, who will never become scholars, in skills they will need and use. He prophesied that eventually graduate schools will no longer require a reading knowledge of German or French of all students, since only an occasional person has need for these skills.

THE READING TABLE

THE 1938 MENTAL MEASUREMENTS YEARBOOK.
Edited by Oscar Krisen Buros. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 1938. 415 pp. \$3.00.

In this unusual volume the editor has utilized the help of the W P A and the American Council on Education. He has also had the assistance of over 100 cooperating university teachers and psychologists who have reviewed various tests and books about tests. The amount of work involved is indicated when it is noted that the number of actual tests reviewed totals over 200, and the number of books on measurement, about 150. Some 150 English and American magazines were gleaned for suggestive reviews.

This study represents the continuation of the work of Dr. Buros in two earlier paper bound volumes and is a comprehensive guide to the whole matter of testing. It is divided into two main sections; the first dealing with the total output of mental tests in the last five years including tests in aptitude and adjustment, guidance, personality, and so forth, and the books on measurement, research, and statistics during the same period. Any one who uses tests at all or the results of tests will find genuine help and guidance in this volume.

One cannot work with the volume, even for a brief period of time, without learning that here is the work of a fearless young educator who recognizes the fact that the testing movement, which purported to be the scientific development in education, has turned out to be quite otherwise. The reviews of the cooperating reviewers were passed on to the authors and publishers of the tests for their comment before they were published. While many of the reviews seem to be rather colorless, many on the other hand are very critical of the procedures in developing a given test and of the information available for those who use the test. If it proves possible for the editor to carry on this work for a period of years as it is hoped, and if Rutgers University